UDL Symposium In-person Program

*(as at 11 June 2024)*

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|  | **Wednesday 12 June 2024: In-person Program** |
| **8:00am** | **Registration desk open** |
| **Foyer** | Delegates are invited to join us for a cuppa and a slice |
| **8:50am** | **Welcome** |
| **Main Room** | **Conference Opening - Dr Kate Anderson MC**  Conference Housekeeping  Welcome to Country  Welcome to RMIT - Professor Sherman Young RMIT, Deputy Vice-Chancellor - Education |
| **9:15am** | **Concurrent Presentations** |
| **Main Room** | **Infecting our university with UDL, one academic at a time!**  Dr Helen Black, Dr Annette Sartor and Dr Nicole Bridges, Western Sydney University  Presentation: 20 minutes  9:15-9:35  **BREAK 9:35-9:45**  **Reinvigorating Nyungar Boodja: Collaboration and implementation of Nyungar and UDL pedagogies to rekindle desire for participatory action by Indigenous and non-Indigenous students**  Max Jackson, Anthony Kickett, Marleigh Zada, Curtin University  Presentation: 20 minutes  9:45-10:05 |
| **Breakout Room** | **Harnessing Generative AI to Empower Inclusive Education**  Kria Coleman, University of Sydney  Workshop: 55 minutes  9:15-10:10 |
| **10:10am** | **Break** |
| **10:45am** | **Concurrent Presentations** |
| **Main Room** | **Inclusive Learning Brainstorm: UDL ideas to remove barriers to learning**  Justin Wylie  Workshop: 55 minutes  10:45 – 11:40 |
| **Breakout Room** | **Rhetorical Storytelling and UDL: Leveraging Narratives for Systemic Change**  Dr Ella Collins-White, University of Sydney  Workshop: 55 minutes  10:45 – 11:40 |
| **11:40am** | **Break** |
| **11:50am** | **Concurrent Presentations** |
| **Main Room** | **Using the student voice to measure success and impact**  Dr Samantha Poulos, University of Sydney  Presentation: 20 minutes  11:50 – 12:10  **BREAK 12:10 – 12:20**  **UDL Strategies for Inclusive Animation**  Dianne Herft, RMIT University  Presentation: 20 minutes  12:20 – 12:40 |
| **Breakout Room** | **Breaking the Performative Façade: Genuine Universal Design in Higher Education**  Terra Starbird, Bruna Contro, Canberra Institute of Technology, Bhavani Kannan and Jen Xiang, University of New South Wales  Workshop: 55 minutes  11:50 – 12:45 |
| **12:45pm** | **Lunch** |
| **1:30pm** | **Keynote Speaker** |
| **Main Room** | **Scaling Up with Universal Design for Learning . . . and How to Get Colleagues to Join You**  Dr Thomas Tobin, University of Wisconsin-Madison  Keynote presentation: 55 minutes  1:30-2:25 |
| **2:25pm** | **Break** |
| **2:35pm** | **Concurrent Presentations** |
| **Main Room** | **UDL, Technology, and Disability Support: “We influence UDL by being around the table...”**  Dr Jacquie Tinkler, Dr Ella Dixon and Gene Hodgins, Charles Sturt University  Presentation: 20 minutes  2:35 – 2:55 |
| **Breakout Room** | **Building Inclusive Learning Communities: The University of Sydney’s Approach**  Sarah Humphreys, University of Sydney  Presentation: 20 minutes  2:35 – 2:55 |
| **2:55pm** | **Afternoon Tea** |
| **3:20pm** | **Concurrent Presentations** |
| **Main Room** | **Developing an inclusive curriculum and teaching team culture using UDL**  Dr Helen Black, Western Sydney University  Presentation: 20 minutes  3:20 – 3:40 |
| **Breakout Room** | **Navigating Inclusivity on a Shoestring: Casual Convenorship and UDL Implementation**  Susannah French, Australian National University  Presentation: 20 minutes  3:20 – 3:40 |
| **3:40pm** | **Break** |
| **3:50pm** | **Panel Discussion** |
| **Main Room** | **Advancing UDL: Navigating the Journey to Institutional-Wide Implementation**  **Chair:**  Darlene McLennan Manager, Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training  **Panel members:**  Thomas Tobin, University of Wisconsin-Madison  Sarah Humphreys: Educational Design Manager, UDL Lead, University of Sydney  Elizabeth Hitchens: Sessional Academic, Inclusive Education, Griffith University  John Fardoulis: Lead Universal Design, TAFE NSW  Lara Rafferty: Associate Director, Equity and Inclusion, RMIT University  Panel Discussion: 50 minutes  3:50 – 4:40 |
| **4:40pm** | **Symposium Wrap-up** |
| **Main Room** | Dr Kate Anderson |

[View expanded information for each presentation](#_Presentation_details)

[View the full abstracts of each presentation](#_Abstracts)

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| Presentation details |

## [Keynote Session](#_Day_1:_Keynote)

### Scaling Up with Universal Design for Learning . . . and How to Get Colleagues to Join You

Dr Thomas Tobin, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Keynote Speaker (9:15 am – 10:15 am)

Join us for a thought-provoking presentation that aims to challenge us to radically rethink how we approach the creation of educational materials and learning experiences. Far beyond just accommodating learners with disability, Thomas will guide us towards a broader framework and how adopting Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles can benefit all students.

Prepare to be inspired as Thomas’s keynote presentation reframes the way we think about inclusive education. Walk away with a renewed commitment to making your educational materials and practices truly inclusive, ensuring that every learner has the opportunity to succeed.

## [Main Room Sessions](#_Day_1:_Concurrent)

### Inclusive Learning Brainstorm: UDL ideas to remove barriers to learning

Justin Wylie, CQUniversity

Workshop: 55 minutes (10:45 am – 11:40 am)

An active problem-solving session to generate ideas that will remove barriers to learning for diverse learners and contexts. Wherever you are in your UDL journey – come along to share idea and experiences, gain new perspectives, and explore the diverse ways you can apply UDL to support more inclusive teaching, learning and assessment. This workshop will include discussion, small group work and the presentation/ sharing of ideas. The outcomes of the workshop will be captured and shared with all participants.

### Using the student voice to measure success and impact

Dr Samantha Poulos, University of Sydney

Presentation: 20 minutes (11:50 am – 12:10 pm)

This presentation will explore some of the ongoing projects we are working on at The University of Sydney and how we are using the data we have collected (focusing on the student voice through focus groups and surveys) as varied ways of measuring the success and impact of UDL implementation.

### UDL Strategies for Inclusive Animation

Dianne Herft, RMIT University

Presentation: 20 minutes (12:20 pm – 12.40 pm)

The abstract outlines a commitment to Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles in animation creation, focusing on ensuring inclusivity and accessibility for all learners. Key aspects covered include meticulous attention to colour contrast, text size, readability, and the provision of textual alternatives for auditory content. Additionally, the abstract emphasises the importance of accessible colour choices and the creation of diverse modalities for engagement to cater to varied learning preferences. The approach aims to foster a more inclusive educational experience by prioritising accessibility across design aspects in animation creation.

### Reinvigorating Nyungar Boodja: Collaboration and implementation of Nyungar and UDL pedagogies to rekindle desire for participatory action by Indigenous and non-Indigenous students

Max Jackson, Anthony Kickett, Marleigh Zada, Curtin University

Presentation: 20 minutes (1:30 pm – 1:50 pm)

Implementation of both Nyungar cultural protocols and Universal Design Learning principles to our mode of teaching allows students to become critically inquisitive and strongly engaged in knowledge and history of Nyungar boodja (Country), producing activists and allies to assist with the momentum of positive change in our community.

### Infecting our university with UDL, one academic at a time!

Dr Helen Black, Annette Sartor and Nicole Bridges, Western Sydney University

Presentation: 20 minutes (2:00 pm – 2:20 pm)

Three academic colleagues from different schools are starting a journey towards a more inclusive culture at our institution, through UDL teaching practices. We will build on scholarly expertise and reflective teaching approaches to change mindsets from traditional teacher-centred approaches, towards adaptive, and flexible approaches that engage and empower all learners.

### UDL, Technology, and Disability Support: “We influence UDL by being around the table...”

Dr Jacquie Tinkler, Ella Dixon and Gene Hodgins, Charles Sturt University

Presentation: 20 minutes (2:35 pm – 2:55 pm)

This presentation presents the findings of a research project that explored the ways digital technologies and UDL approaches are used by Disability Support Officers and Managers to support online university students who live with mental illness.

### Developing an inclusive curriculum and teaching team culture using UDL

Dr Helen Black, Western Sydney University

Presentation: 20 minutes (3:20 pm – 3:40 pm)

Creating an inclusive curriculum using the principles of UDL. By involving adjunct academics in design and development stages, not just the implementation stages, we promote an academic team culture and shared vision of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and ensure that all learners in the course experience an inclusive learning environment.

### Advancing UDL: Navigating the Journey to Institutional-Wide Implementation

**Chair:** Darlene McLennan Manager, Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training

**Panel members:**

Thomas Tobin, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Sarah Humphreys: Educational Design Manager, UDL Lead, University of Sydney

Elizabeth Hitchens: Sessional Academic, Inclusive Education, Griffith University

John Fardoulis: Lead Universal Design, TAFE NSW

Lara Rafferty: Associate Director, Equity and Inclusion, RMIT University

Panel Session: 50 minutes (3.50 pm – 4.40 pm)

This panel will explore the strategies, challenges, and best practices for advancing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) implementation from isolated efforts to comprehensive, institution-approaches. The panellists will reflect the different stages of UDL implementation, ranging from initial awareness to widespread adoption.

## [Breakout Room Sessions](#_Day_1:_Concurrent)

### Rhetorical Storytelling and UDL: Leveraging Narratives for Systemic Change

Dr Ella Collins-White, University of Sydney

Workshop: 55 minutes (10:45 am – 11:40 am)

In this workshop, participants will harness the rhetorical capacity of storytelling to impact institutional change through UDL principles. They will create and share impactful case studies, learning to use storytelling to promote inclusivity beyond the classroom and catalyse cultural change, ultimately enhancing learning experiences for all students.

### Breaking the Performative Façade: Genuine Universal Design in Higher Education

Terra Starbird, Bruna Contro, Canberra Institute of Technology, Bhavani Kannan and Jen Xiang, University of New South Wales

Workshop: 55 minutes (11:50 am – 12:45 pm)

Join our interactive workshop to dismantle performative Universal Design in higher education. Collaborate to develop authentic UD practices through participatory co-design, purposeful policy integration, and securing executive buy-in. Equip yourself with actionable steps to foster a truly inclusive learning environment, ensuring a sustained commitment to accessibility and equity.

### Harnessing Generative AI to Empower Inclusive Education

Kria Coleman, University of Sydney

Workshop: 55 minutes (1:30 pm – 2:25 pm)

An opportunity to try three customised Generative AI tools informed by UDL principles that support academics to consider and apply UDL principles in the design of their teaching and assessment at the University of Sydney.

### Building Inclusive Learning Communities: The University of Sydney’s Approach

Sarah Humphreys, University of Sydney

Presentation: 20 minutes (2:35 pm – 2:55 pm)

The University of Sydney fosters inclusive educational communities by integrating UDL across its campus. The strategy includes a resource and interaction site, detailed case studies, and a community of practice. Regular UDL chats and workshops enhance dialogue, inclusivity, and collaboration, supporting diverse learning needs and promoting educational equity.

### Navigating Inclusivity on a Shoestring: Casual Convenorship and UDL Implementation

Susannah French, Australian National University

Presentation: 20 minutes (3:20 pm – 3:40 pm)

This presentation emphasises the tension between the demands of administrative bureaucracy and the need to provide inclusive education, highlighting the challenges and strategies for implementing UDL principles effectively within the constraints of casual convenorship. The presentation also offers practical, zero cost strategies that have been successfully employed to navigate these constraints.

| Abstracts |
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## Keynote Session

### **Scaling Up with Universal Design for Learning . . . and How to Get Colleagues to Join You**

Dr Thomas Tobin, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Keynote Speaker (9:15 am – 10:15 am)

To help make educational materials and practices inclusive and useful for all learners, this interactive session radically reflects on how instructors and designers can adopt Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in order to create learning interactions that provide students with more time for study and practice in their busy days: broaden our focus beyond learners with disabilities and toward a larger ease-of-use/general-inclusion framework.

Our session will contain three scaffolded elements: an overview of UDL, how to scale up UDL efforts beyond individual actions, and how to talk with colleagues in order to establish UDL communities of practice in line with the recent focus of the Australian Universities Accord on “learning and teaching that is personalised and scalable” (Australian Government, 2023, p. 81) through the use of UDL principles.

## Main Room Sessions

### **Inclusive Learning Brainstorm: UDL ideas to remove barriers to learning**

Justin Wylie, CQUniversity

Workshop: 55 minutes (10:45 am – 11:40 am)

Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) was a famous Russian psychologist who proposed that the social and cultural context of learning was how we actually make meaning and gain new understanding. This workshop will use a social constructivist approach to generate UDL solutions to diverse learners’ requirements and in a range of common tertiary contexts.

### **Using the student voice to measure success and impact**

Dr Samantha Poulos, University of Sydney

Presentation: 20 minutes (11:50 am – 12:10 pm)

This presentation will explore some of the ongoing projects we are working on at The University of Sydney and how we are using the data we have collected (focusing on the student voice through focus groups and surveys) as varied ways of measuring the success and impact of UDL implementation.

### **UDL Strategies for Inclusive Animation**

Dianne Herft, RMIT University

Presentation: 20 minutes (12:20 pm – 12.40 pm)

This submission deeply explores integrating Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles into animation creation, focusing on inclusivity and accessibility for an enriching learning journey. By seamlessly integrating animation interactives and objects, the educational landscape becomes engaging and conducive to diverse learner profiles, significantly enhancing the accessibility of digital learning materials.

A central aspect of this approach is the meticulous consideration of colour contrast. Recognising its pivotal role in aiding individuals with varying degrees of visual impairment, adhering to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) ensures adequate contrast levels for optimal legibility and distinction. Prioritising accessibility in visual design makes the learning experience more inclusive and welcoming to learners with diverse needs.

Additionally, text size adjustments are implemented thoughtfully to enhance readability and comprehension for learners across the spectrum. Utilising clear fonts and appropriate spacing accommodates varying visual abilities, fostering an inclusive learning environment where every student can effectively engage with the material.

Furthermore, colour palette selection is meticulously guided by principles of accessibility and inclusivity. By consciously choosing colours accessible to individuals with colour vision deficiencies, over-reliance on colour alone to convey information is minimised. Incorporating visual cues like patterns or symbols ensures comprehension across diverse learner profiles, fostering an even more inclusive learning environment.

Beyond visual considerations, the commitment to accessibility extends to providing textual alternatives. Comprehensive transcripts accompany each animation, serving as invaluable resources for individuals with hearing impairments, aiding deeper understanding and retention of key concepts.

Exploration of alternative means, interactives, and experiences aims to provide learners with varied pathways to access information, catering to individual learning preferences.

In conclusion, integrating UDL principles into animation creation fosters inclusivity and accessibility, enriching the digital learning experience for all students. It ensures a truly inclusive and equitable educational environment, regardless of their abilities or learning preferences.

### **Reinvigorating Nyungar Boodja: Collaboration and implementation of Nyungar and UDL pedagogies to rekindle desire for participatory action by Indigenous and non-Indigenous students**

Max Jackson, Anthony Kickett, Marleigh Zada, Curtin University

Presentation: 20 minutes (1:30 pm – 1:50 pm)

To combat the colonial narratives constructed about Nyungar peoples and change perceptions of history in Boorloo (Perth), our Nyungar Culture and Identity unit privileges relational ways of working to hold students' development in a culturally secure manner. Implementing our traditional learning methodologies alongside carefully considered Universally Designed Learning principles allows students to understand their position in history and how we can begin to move forward with positive, inclusive change in modern Australia.

Our 7-day intensive unit sometimes presents challenges with sharing knowledge with new learners, however, we respectfully utilise community members, local NAIDOC events, a range of Aboriginal lecturers, and of course, Nyungar Boodja (Country) herself to assist with the colonial load we undertake in the Indigenous education space. Reinvigorating the Boorloo CBD and surrounding locations with an understanding that our city is still Country promotes complete engagement in both Country and classroom content while challenging historical and present-day understandings of the strength of Nyungar peoples and the validity of our practices.

Our processes of learning on-Country, representing the diverse voices and perspectives of Aboriginal people who live in the South-West of Western Australia and encouraging students to engage in courageous conversations and critical self-reflection are key to the success of the learner. By weaving Nyungar and Western methods of knowledge acquisition and assessment, students are completely immersed in the inclusivity of the third space and their inquisitive nature flourishes, proving significant growth in the individual mindset of each student, and provoking further curiosity and desire to genuinely engage with Nyungar peoples and the local environment we all call ‘home’. This unit produces students who have an active role in this knowledge sharing journey post-completion of the unit in their own respective communities, as well as a desire to continue learning about and engaging with Nyungar boodja and her peoples.

### **Infecting our university with UDL, one academic at a time!**

Dr Helen Black, Annette Sartor and Nicole Bridges, Western Sydney University

Presentation: 20 minutes (2:00 pm – 2:20 pm)

Three colleagues from different schools, starting a journey from small beginnings of taking one subject in UDL the Master of Education (Leadership) degree, towards an inclusive culture at our institution. We envisage UDL and inclusivity to be the new pandemic and want to ‘infect’ the institution one colleague at a time moving from ineffective and exclusionary traditional teaching to more adaptive, flexible, and comprehensive approaches, to engage and empower different types of learners, and to embrace what they bring to the tertiary experience. Inclusion is a journey, not a destination, and we aim to build on scholarly expertise, and reflective teaching experiences to spread an inclusive culture through sharing UDL approaches to colleagues.

We will initiate conversations with colleagues about inclusive language and question unconscious bias, by sharing resources and techniques for building an inclusive working and learning environment on campus and online. Challenges are anticipated in disrupting the status quo, as many academics are defensive about pedagogy and subject matters in which they are the expert. Even for those staff who support and understand the importance of UDL, academics are time poor, and research is often prioritised over curriculum rejuvenation. We hope to overcome barriers by sharing our experiences and showcasing the benefits of UDL to all students, by taking a proactive approach to meet diverse learners at the design stage.

In our session, we are hoping to draw from the expertise of a collective audience to provide advice, examples and share strategies that have worked in other institutions. This will assist us in our quest to lead by example in demonstrating curriculum renewal and cultural change at a broader level. We will showcase how to adapt and build flexibility in learning materials, active learning activities, and effective assessments that lead to greater student engagement and success.

### **UDL, Technology, and Disability Support: “We influence UDL by being around the table...”**

Dr Jacquie Tinkler, Ella Dixon and Gene Hodgins, Charles Sturt University

Presentation: 20 minutes (2:35 pm – 2:55 pm)

Increasing numbers of students with cognitive disabilities and mental health conditions are accessing higher education each year, yet little is known about their educational technology needs or the extent to which UDL approaches impact their learning success.

This session presents the findings from a research project that explored how digital technologies and UDL approaches are used by university Disability Support Officers (DLOs) and Managers (DSMs) to assist online students with mental health conditions. The findings from the qualitative data gathered from nine Disability Support professionals will be presented and discussed. Our findings showed that the move to online learning during the COVID pandemic influenced how digital technology use for learning was considered, and the awareness and integration of digital technologies in ways that could assist students with disabilities became more widespread.

However, in the context of Disability Support Services, digital technologies were still often provided according to the needs of each student, due to licence limitations and the support model that is based on providing individual accommodations. Concerns that technology might be overused to the detriment of students’ learning, relationship-building, and study skills were also expressed including concerns that students with mental illnesses ‘needed to learn’ particular personal skills that technology was seen as replacing.

The role of Disability Support Officers and Managers as active advocates for students with disabilities and their need for accessible and inclusive use of technology across their university will also be discussed. Finally, how these findings can inform and guide the future direction of technology-enhanced UDL implementation in universities will be presented.

### **Developing an inclusive curriculum and teaching team culture using UDL**

Dr Helen Black, Western Sydney University

Presentation: 20 minutes (3:20 pm – 3:40 pm)

Together with a very passionate team of adjunct academics, we are making inclusivity explicit in the learning environment, as our common goal, and we are committed to doing better for our students.

After stripping back the existing and traditional curriculum to its core learning objectives, we have rebuilt taking care to scaffold only relevant topics with a universal design framework to minimise barriers to access and engagement. We have incorporated active learning and student reflection on their own learning processes to provide a feedback loop to the teaching team. In addition, the teaching team are keeping reflective journals to help identify any remaining barriers so we can continue to improve in real time.

We have identified, and removed, unconscious bias and hidden curriculum in subject content and structures, using UDL principles we have removed barriers to learning, engagement, and developed a deliberately inclusive curriculum.

We have built an academic team culture of inclusivity, accountability, and continuous improvement.

We are motivated and confident but still have some challenges such as some university and professional body assessment policies, balancing academic integrity with flexibility and timely feedback, potential to overwhelm some learners with choice. Some accounting content has been more challenging to make fully inclusive and we are yet to gain buy-in of other academics to adopt authentic inclusive practices. We hope that when we have solid results to showcase, we can be persuasive and support others to be embrace UDL and be more inclusive.

## [Breakout Room Sessions](#_Day_1:_Concurrent)

### **Rhetorical Storytelling and UDL: Leveraging Narratives for Systemic Change**

Dr Ella Collins-White, University of Sydney

Workshop: 55 minutes (10:45 am – 11:40 am)

How can we use the groundswell of individuals employing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to break down institutional barriers and instigate enduring transformations? The UDL framework significantly enhances learning adaptation, promoting a model that is both inclusive and responsive. Our workshop explores this pressing question by underscoring the power of storytelling in effecting institutional change, working towards developing an inclusive culture both through UDL and driven by advocates of UDL. We will demonstrate how personal narratives and case studies not only communicate but deeply influence systemic inclusivity within educational settings. By highlighting individuals' challenges, barriers, and solutions, these stories garner support and vividly illustrate the tangible impacts of UDL, thereby transforming abstract principles into compelling calls to action.

This interactive session will focus on crafting powerful narratives that encapsulate the essence of UDL and its real-world effects on both students and staff. Participants will have the opportunity to engage with examples, share their own stories, and discuss strategies to effectively showcase these narratives within their own contexts. Our workshop outline is as follows:

1. Share and Scaffold: Our team will share our own ‘case study’ of implementing and upscaling UDL at the University of Sydney and provide a scaffold to create case studies (15 minutes)
2. Think: Time given to individuals to think through and/or finesse ideas for what might be a useful case study for your context (5 minutes)
3. Discuss: Participants will then be placed in breakout rooms to work in groups together on challenges and to share their ideas (15 minutes)
4. Pitch: Participants will be given the option to pitch in the workshop and receive feedback (20 minutes)
5. Attendees will leave equipped to advocate for UDL-driven changes across campuses, promoting an inclusive culture that enhances learning experiences for all students.

### **Breaking the Performative Façade: Genuine Universal Design in Higher Education**

Terra Starbird, Bruna Contro, Canberra Institute of Technology, Bhavani Kannan and Jen Xiang, University of New South Wales

Workshop: 55 minutes (11:50 am – 12:45 pm)

In the ever-evolving landscape of higher education, Universal Design (UD) has emerged as a powerful concept, promising inclusivity and accessibility for all. However, beneath the glossy surface of institutional commitment lies a deeper challenge: performative UD. This phenomenon occurs when institutions merely pay lip service to UD without genuinely embedding it into their practices. Not only does this diminish UD to a superficial concept, but often it can harm the very students who rely on UDL practices for their learning. Our interactive workshop aims to tackle this issue head-on. We invite educators, administrators, management, and advocates to examine the shiny badge of inclusivity worn proudly by universities and vocational institutions alike and raise it beyond being a buzzword.

Join us as we investigate how to combat the facade of performative UD which continues to mask a host of deeper issues that undermine UD’s true implementation and impact across the sector. Participants will work together to develop actionable ideas, tools, and skills to challenge and dismantle performative UD in their organisations. By employing genuine participatory co-design, harnessing policy and legislation, securing executive buy-in, making strategic, incremental change, and, using the very tool of Universal Design, to bring about long-term, systemic change, this workshop will explore strategies for enhancing faculty and executive understanding of UD in higher education settings to combat performative, superficial UDL.

Conspire with us to shatter the inclusivity illusion with fellow UDL advocates and practitioners who know that UDL demands a deep, sustained commitment to addressing the needs and experiences of all students, regardless of their abilities, access requirements, backgrounds, or circumstances. Only by confronting the cracks in this facade can we build a higher education system that is truly accessible, equitable, and inclusive for all.

### **Harnessing Generative AI to Empower Inclusive Education**

Kria Coleman, University of Sydney

Workshop: 55 minutes (1:30 pm – 2:25 pm)

The University of Sydney is actively engaging with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to enhance the inclusivity of our education environment. This interactive session, Harnessing Generative AI to Empower Inclusive Education, will examine the role of generative artificial intelligence in supporting this endeavour, particularly within the framework of the university's "Designing for Diversity" strategy.

This session will briefly discuss the development and implementation of customised the University of Sydney AI assist, plus LUDIA, another AI powered partner. These tools aimed at aiding faculty members in the application of UDL principles to their teaching and assessment. Thes tools serve as an ally in designing educational experiences that are accessible and effective for a diverse student population by providing tailored, actionable guidance to educators.

Key to our interactive session will be the opportunity to experiment with three Generative AI tools. The goal will be to discover how they can be harnessed to enhance the adoption of inclusive education practices, based on workshop participant’s real-world applications and outcomes. We will share insights from early pilot programs that illustrate their ability to enrich course design and elevate student inclusions and engagement, along with feedback from users and students.

The intersection of AI and UDL presents an exciting opportunity for increasing the inclusivity of learning environments in higher education. Our workshop will also address the critical conversations we have been having surrounding the ethical use of AI in an educational context, emphasising the importance of using technology thoughtfully and responsibly to foster inclusivity.

### **Building Inclusive Learning Communities: The University of Sydney’s Approach**

Sarah Humphreys, University of Sydney

Presentation: 20 minutes (2:35 pm – 2:55 pm)

What impact can fostering inclusive educational communities have on designing for diversity in our learning environments? This 15-minute presentation will outline the initiatives undertaken by the University of Sydney to foster inclusive learning communities through the implementation of UDL principles across its campus. The university’s approach serves as a comprehensive model, integrating various elements of UDL, emphasizing flexibility in the ways information is presented.

A site serves as a repository for UDL resources and facilitates dynamic interaction among educators. This site features case studies showcasing successful integration of UDL principles in different disciplinary contexts, illustrating practical applications that other educators can adapt and emulate. Additionally, blog articles, further enrich the community’s knowledge base.

A key component of the University of Sydney’s strategy includes the establishment of a community of practice (CoP) that brings together faculty and professional staff to share strategies, challenges, and successes related to UDL. This CoP meets regularly, creating a robust support network that encourages continuous learning and improvement in teaching practices. This CoP is opened to guests that can gain insights from their peers and support on developing their own UDL journey, transform their teaching and create better learning experiences for all students.

Further enhancing the UDL framework, the university conducts monthly UDL chats and workshops, which are pivotal in maintaining an ongoing dialogue about UDL. Open to all members of the teaching and learning community, these sessions not only provide immediate, actionable feedback but also foster a culture of inclusivity and collaboration that extends beyond the classroom. Through this chat, people connect and share innovative ideas that can be applied by all. This assists in developing a broader community of UDL minded educators.

The University of Sydney’s comprehensive approach to UDL demonstrates a commitment to educational excellence and equity.

### **Navigating Inclusivity on a Shoestring: Casual Convenorship and UDL Implementation**

Susannah French, Australian National University

Presentation: 20 minutes (3:50 pm – 4:10 pm)

Casual convenors in higher education are uniquely positioned, often grappling with the dual pressures of administrative bureaucracy and the imperative to provide inclusive, high-quality education to diverse student cohorts. This presentation delves into the complexities of applying Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles within the constraints of casual convenorship, characterised by limited resources, transient roles, and stringent institutional demands. This presentation underscores the difficulties in aligning UDL's inclusive strategies—multiple means of engagement, representation, and action/expression—with the rigid frameworks of administrative bureaucracy, often resulting in a precarious balance between fulfilling institutional expectations and meeting students' diverse needs.

Drawing on personal experiences and broader educational insights, the presentation illustrates the specific challenges casual convenors face, such as resource scarcity and lack of continuous institutional support, which can hinder the effective application of UDL principles. Despite these barriers, the presentation offers practical, zero cost strategies that have been successfully employed to navigate these constraints, showcasing how UDL can still thrive in less-than-ideal circumstances.

Through detailed case studies, the narrative highlights the ingenuity and resilience required to adapt UDL methodologies, leading to enhanced student outcomes and demonstrating the value of inclusive education. The presentation also emphasises the crucial role of community building and networking in bolstering the efforts of casual convenors, enabling a collective approach to overcoming isolation and resource limitations.

Advocating for systemic change, the discussion points to the necessity for institutions to recognise and support casual convenors in their endeavour to implement UDL effectively, bridging the gap between administrative rigidity and the dynamic needs of student populations. In conclusion, the presentation reaffirms the critical impact of UDL in fostering inclusive educational environments, calling for a concerted effort from educational institutions to facilitate and support the application of UDL principles by casual convenors, ensuring equitable learning experiences for all students.